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Agenda item 66

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerzy ZALESKI (Poland)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Question of Antarctica" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in accordance with its resolutions 46/41 A and B of 6 December 1991.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 18 September 1992, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 October 1992, the First Committee decided that the general debate, consideration of and action on the draft resolution on item 66 should take place from 23 to 25 November. The deliberations on and consideration of that item took place between the 38th and 40th meetings, from 23 to 25 November (see A/C.1/47/PV.38-40). Action on the draft resolution on that item took place at the 40th meeting, on 25 November (see A/C.1/47/PV.40).

4. In connection with item 66, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica (A/47/541);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica (A/47/542);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the state of the environment in Antarctica (A/47/624).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/47/L.54

5. On 23 November 1992, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen submitted a draft resolution entitled "Question of Antarctica" (A/C.1/47/L.54), which was later also sponsored by Oman. Subsequent to the issuance of the draft resolution, the delegation of Mauritius informed the Secretariat that it had decided to join the list of sponsors of the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Malaysia at the 39th meeting, on 24 November.

6. At its 40th meeting, on 25 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54 by a roll-call vote of 71 to none, with 6 abstentions (see para. 7). The voting was as follows: 1/

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Portugal, Turkey, Venezuela.

1/ The following 45 States announced that they were not participating in the vote:

Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay.

Subsequently, the delegation of Afghanistan indicated that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of Antarctica

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Antarctica",

Recalling its resolutions 38/77 of 15 December 1983, 39/152 of 17 December 1984, 40/156 A and B of 16 December 1985, 41/88 A and B of 4 December 1986, 42/46 A and B of 30 November 1987, 43/83 A and B of 7 December 1988, 44/124 A and B of 15 December 1989, 45/78 A and B of 12 December 1990 and 46/41 A and B of 6 December 1991,

Recalling also the relevant paragraphs of the final documents adopted by the second meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, held at Abuja from 25 to 29 June 1990, 2/ the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Istanbul from 4 to 8 August 1991, 3/ the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held at Harare from 16 to 22 October 1991 4/ and the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Jakarta from 1 to 6 September 1992, 5/

Recalling further the Declaration on South Africa adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its twenty-eighth ordinary session, held at Dakar from 29 June to 1 July 1992,

Taking into account the debates on this item held since its thirty-eighth session,

Reaffirming the principle that the international community is entitled to information covering all aspects of Antarctica and that the United Nations should be made the repository for all such information in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/88 A, 42/46 B, 43/83 A, 44/124 B, 45/78 A and 46/41 A,

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2/ See A/45/474, annex.

3/ A/46/486-S/23055, annex.

4/ A/46/708, annex, para. 44.

5/ A/47/675-S/24816, annex.

Welcoming the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to submit to the Secretary-General the final report of the Sixteenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, which took place at Bonn from 7 to 18 October 1991,

Conscious of the particular significance of Antarctica to the international community in terms, inter alia, of international peace and security, environment, its effects on global climate conditions, economy and scientific research,

Conscious also of the interrelationship between Antarctica and the physical, chemical and biological processes that regulate the total Earth system,

Welcoming the increasing recognition of the significant impact that Antarctica exerts on the global environment and ecosystems and of the need for a comprehensive agreement to be negotiated by the international community on the protection and conservation of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems,

Reiterating the concern over the environmental degradation of Antarctica and its impact on the global environment,

Welcoming the recognition by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, of the value of Antarctica as an area for the conduct of scientific research, in particular research essential to understanding the global environment,

Welcoming also the increasing support, including by some Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, for the establishment of Antarctica as a nature reserve or world park to ensure the protection and conservation of its environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems for the benefit of all mankind,

Welcoming further the ongoing trend in acknowledging the need for internationally coordinated scientific research stations in Antarctica in order to minimize unnecessary duplication and logistical support facilities,

Welcoming further the increasing awareness of an interest in Antarctica shown by the international community, and convinced of the advantages to the whole of mankind of a better knowledge of Antarctica,

Affirming its conviction that, in the interest of all mankind, Antarctica should continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that it should not become the scene or object of international discord,

Reaffirming that the management and use of Antarctica should be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of mankind as a whole,

Convinced of the need for concerted international cooperation in order to protect and safeguard Antarctica and its dependent ecosystems from external environmental disturbances for future generations,

1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General 6/ on the report of the Sixteenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, which took place in Bonn from 7 to 18 October 1991, and on the participation of the apartheid minority regime of South Africa in meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties;

2. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the state of the environment in Antarctica, 7/ and requests the Secretary-General to explore the possibilities of publishing, as official documents of the United Nations, extracts of data received from the various organizations in the preparation of future annual reports, within existing resources;

3. While noting the cooperation of some United Nations specialized agencies and programmes at the Sixteenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, expresses its regret that, despite the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General or his representative has not been invited to the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, and urges once again the Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to their future meetings;

4. Bearing in mind that the Antarctic Treaty is, by its terms, intended to further the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, with which South Africa has yet to comply fully, calls upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to prevent South Africa from participating fully in the meetings of the Consultative Parties pending the attainment of a non-racial democratic government in that country;

5. While welcoming the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to provide information regarding the Sixteenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, encourages the Parties to provide to the Secretary-General, on a continuing basis, more information and documents covering all aspects of Antarctica, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on his evaluations thereof to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session;

6. Welcomes the commitment made by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties under chapter 17 of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 8/ as provided for in article III of the Antarctic Treaty, to continue:

6/ A/47/541 and A/47/542.

7/ A/47/624.

8/ See A/CONF.151/26 (vols. I-III).

(a) To ensure that data and information resulting from scientific research activities conducted in Antarctica are freely available to the international community;

(b) To enhance access of the international scientific community and specialized agencies of the United Nations to such data and information, including the encouragement of periodic seminars and symposia;

7. Urges the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to build on the agreements achieved at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly as noted in paragraph 6 of the present resolution, and, in this connection, actively to explore the possibility of organizing an annual seminar/symposium covering issues relating to the environment, commencing in 1993, with as wide international participation as possible, including that of international organizations such as the United Nations;

8. Urges the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to establish monitoring and implementation mechanisms to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection;

9. Welcoming the ban on prospecting and mining in and around Antarctica for the next fifty years by Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties in accordance with the 1991 Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection, and reiterates its call for the ban to be made permanent;

10. Reiterates its call that any move at drawing up an international convention to establish a nature reserve or world park in Antarctica and its dependent and associated ecosystems must be negotiated with the full participation of the international community;

11. While welcoming the concrete steps taken by the Secretariat through the publication by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat on Antarctica, reaffirms the need to promote further public awareness of the importance of Antarctica to the ecosystem, and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide relevant materials on Antarctica through the Department of Public Information within existing resources;

12. Encourages the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to increase the level of cooperation and collaboration with a view to reducing the number of scientific stations in Antarctica;

13. Urges the international community to ensure that all activities in Antarctica are carried out exclusively for the purpose of peaceful scientific investigation and that all such activities will ensure the maintenance of international peace and security and the protection of the Antarctic environment and are for the benefit of all mankind;

14. Urges all States Members of the United Nations to cooperate with the Secretary-General on matters pertaining to Antarctica and to continue consultations on all aspects relating to the continent;

15. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".